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ABSTRACT

During the period covered by this annotated bibliography the Jewish population in the United States increased 10-fold to two and one half million. Approximately 90% of the immigrants came from Eastern Europe, with a large proportion of them settling in New York City's Lower East Side, or Great Ghetto. The print sources cited represent a variety of disciplines and forms of discourse: history, sociology, short stories, novels, essays, letters, reportage, etc. All items are in the New York City Public Library, Main Branch; many are available on inter-library loan and commercially. Suggestions for reproducing works with expired copyright are included. The publications were written both recently and during the 37 year period covered, both by Jewish and non-Jewish authors. Topics include Jewish life in the shtetl, or Eastern European village, and America, especially New York City. All works are in English, some being translations from the original Yiddish. (Author/DJB)

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Occasional Paper Series

Dr. Eli Seifman, Series Editor

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JEWISH STUDIES IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL: MATERIALS AND SOURCES, 1881-1917: THE GREAT MIGRATION

by

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American Historical Association History Education Project

The State University of New York, Stony Brook, New York

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PREFACE

We are currently witnessing in this country a new Jewish consciousness, a re-awakening of interest in "the Jewish experience." Within the last two years there has been a dramatic increase in the number of courses and programs in Jewish Studies offered at American colleges and universities. A Jewish Student Press Service was established in November, 1971 to offer materials to the growing number of Jewish student papers on college and university campuses in the United States and Canada. Counterparts of various "ethnic studies"--Black (or Afro-American) Studies, Puerto Rican Studies, Chicano (or Mexican-American Studies), Indian Studies, Asian (or Oriental) Studies, etc.--can now be found both at the college and secondary school levels, and to some degree in the primary grades as well.

Similarly, the new Jewish consciousness has fostered a growing interest in Jewish Studies at the secondary school level. This Occasional Paper was prepared by Dr. Mark Goldberg as a resource of selected "print sources" to assist secondary school teachers who wish to study the Jewish migration and settlement of Eastern European Jews in the United States from 1881 to 1917.

It should be pointed out that Dr. Goldberg is currently developing an extensive resource unit on "The Great Migration: 1881-1917" of Eastern European Jews and their settlement in the United States. Interested readers are invited to assist in the development of such a resource unit by sending Dr. Goldberg information or materials on the following: contemporary literary sources (1881-1917); contemporary historical or sociological materials (diaries, letters, newspapers, books, pamphlets, etc.); non-contemporary fiction and non-fiction sources that deal with the period of 1881-1917; and

non-print materials, both contemporary and non-contemporary, that deal with the period (e.g. art, sculpture, music, film, etc.). Please provide as much factual information as possible: a description of the item, where it is located, its cost, and any other helpful information. Copies of any materials you would be willing and able to forward would be especially appreciated. Dr. Goldberg will acknowledge the receipt of all materials sent to him and give appropriate credit to the finder(s) in any subsequent publication of the resource unit.

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Jewish Studies in the Secondary School: Materials and Sources, 1881 - 1917: The Great Migration

The period from 1881 to 1917 saw the Jewish population in America increase from, very roughly, 250,000 people to 2,500,000 people. The Jews of East Europe, fleeing from the endless sanctions and assaults of the Czars and their minions, came to constitute in excess of ninety per cent of American Jewry. Unquestionably, New York City was the locus of Jewish activity, culture and settlement. In 1910, according to the federal census, there were 1,252,000 Jews in New York City, 542,000 of them compacted into a few dozen city streets known as the Great Ghetto or the Lower East Side. That time and place saw an ever-changing, richly textured community grow from poverty to the beginnings of stability. The life of the community was tense, difficult, varied, joyful, pulsating -- in short, anything but phlegmatic.

Following are selected print sources that teachers and students may find helpful in illuminating the period from 1881 to 1917. A variety of forms of discourse and a number of

disciplines are included here: short stories, novels, essays, letters, reportage, history, etc. A strong documentary impulse informs all of this work. Often the fiction is filled with as much detail and realism as the reportage or history. In point of fact, it is frequently exceedingly difficult to distinguish fiction from non-fiction.

NOTES FOR TEACHERS.

1. The sources that follow were selected for one or more of the three reasons listed below:

   a) They are crucial readings.
   b) They are especially interesting readings and may appeal to many secondary students.
   c) They are currently available.

2. Whenever a source is more than fifty-six years old, it is in the public domain. That means that the interested teacher can have his library send for the work through inter-library loan and with the permission of the lending institution reproduce freely. Often this can be cheaper than buying textbooks. Remember, you must reproduce from works more than fifty-six years old, and if in doubt, hesitate, and check with a knowledgeable person. Many of the books listed herein are in the public domain.

3. If there is sufficient interest in this material, the present investigator would be willing to do a cognate bibliography for non-print materials: art, music, film, photographs, etc. Readers are encouraged to write to me and request this.

4. All of the works listed in this bibliography are in the holdings of the New York City Public Library, Main Branch, Fifth Avenue. Most are available on inter-library loan through the Library of Congress or other large libraries, but not through the New York City Library, Fifth Avenue. All works currently in print are listed as such in the bibliography.

ALPHABETICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Herman Bernstein. In the Gates of Israel: Stories of the Jews. 1902. Fiction, Stories

These stories are set both in East Europe and America. Of particular interest is "The Straight Hunchback," a story of an errant husband who pretends to be an eligible bachelor while his wife languishes in Europe. Captured here are authentic details of East European and Lower East Side life and the extraordinary interest landsmen (fellow countrymen) continued to have in each other's affairs even after several years of American settlement. Interfaith marriage, the power of emigration to change customs and the plight of the elderly in bewildering America are among the other themes present in this work.

2. Rudolf Block (Bruno Lessing, pseud.). Children of Men. 1903. Fiction, Stories

Currently Available: Books for Libraries, Inc., 50 Liberty Avenue, Freeport, New York 11520 $11.50

Lessing moves rapidly from theme to theme and style to style, capturing an extraordinary amount of pathos, joy, information and insight in one volume of short stories. Several stories are particularly, and even eloquently, moving. "The End of the Task" depicts a lover watching his beloved die of tuberculosis, the dreaded sweatshop disease. "Urim and Thummim" is a most poignant tale of a father who works during a strike in a vain attempt to provide food for his dying infant daughter. Lessing is also capable of farce, as in " A Swallow-Tailer for Two," which portrays two would-be lovers sharing the same rented formal wear. Teachers may wish to reproduce several of the stories in this interesting book.

3. Rudolf Block (Bruno Lessing, pseud.). With the Best Intention. 1914. Fiction, Stories or Episodic Novel

Organized around Lapidowitz, the scheming schnorrer or clever beggar, the stories in this volume are genuinely humorous and consistently revealing of Jewish immigrant life and behavior. Lapidowitz tries to be clever, but more often than not he is outwitted. In "Lapidowitz Meets Greek" or "Lapidowitz's List" the schnorrer ends up a victim or the butt of a joke. Other stories provide insight into familial relationships, labor conditions, upward social and financial mobility and the like, always with a humorous strand provided by the presence of Lapidowitz.

4. Arthur Bullard (Albert Edwards, pseud.). Comrade Yetta. 1913. Fiction, Novel

Currently Available: Gregg Press, Inc., 121 Pleasant Avenue, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey 07458 $12.50

This is a labor novel, with a series of such sub-themes as Jewish and interfaith romance, social and educational class stratification and the influence of secular culture on traditional religious life. A particularly useful feature of this work is the integrity of several chapters which can easily be excerpted. "The Sweatshop" and "The Strike" are

examples of such chapters. Both are filled with convincing and informative details that illuminate the topics announced in the chapter titles.

5. Abraham Cahan. Yekl and The Imported Bridegroom and Other Stories of the New York Ghetto. Yekl, 1896; The Imported Bridegroom and Other Stories, 1898.

Yekl, Fiction, Novella
The Imported Bridegroom and Other Stories, Fiction, Stories

The Rise of David Levinsky. 1917. Fiction, Novel

Currently Available:

Yekl and The Imported Bridegroom and Other Stories of the New York Ghetto. Dover Publications,Inc., $2.50

The Rise of David Levinsky, Harper Colophon Books, $3.45 and Peter Smith, 6 Lexington Avenue, Gloucester, Mass., 01930 $5.00

Yekl, a novella, was originally published in 1896. The Imported Bridegroom and Other Stories appeared in 1898, although individual stories appeared in magazines somewhat earlier. The Rise of David Levinsky, widely regarded as the finest novel written about the early Jewish experience in New York, was issued in 1917. Yekl and the short stories are concerned with the adjustment of immigrants to America, with a strong emphasis on romantic problems. There is a wealth of realistic background on East European conditions, generational schisms, sweatshop conditions and other related matters. David Levinsky is a long and readable work, not invidiously termed the Jewish David Copperfield. This is a comprehensive work that traces the life of David Levinsky from his boyhood in a Russian shtetl to his conquest of the garment industry in America. Levinsky's victory is pyrhhic in that he accumulates wealth but is unable to get an education or find marital happiness, his two great desiderata. Life in a shtetl, the trip to America, living and working conditions in New York, in brief all of the complex fabric of the uprooting from East Europe and the acclimation to America are depicted in some detail in this excellent realistic novel. All of Cahan's English works are both eminently readable and sophisticated.

6. John Foster Carr. Guide to the United States for the Jewish Immigrant. 1912 and 1916 (Immigrant Publication Society Incorporated). Non-Fiction, Pamphlet

This is an extremely informative and interesting pamphlet, couched in straightforward prose. Everything from job availablity, health care, housing and moral, ethical and legal matters to warnings on seduction and violations of American marriage laws is covered. The political undertone is felt in the effort to steer immigrants to the suburbs and farms; the candor of the pamphlet is made clear in such stern statements as the following:

"BIGAMY - A person who, having a husband or wife living, marries another person, is guilty of the crime of bigamy. Maximum penalty 5 years in prison."

"THE FACT THAT THE FIRST WIFE LIVES IN EUROPE AND HAS NEVER BEEN TO THIS COUNTRY MAKES NO DIFFERENCE."

"A DIVORCE GRANTED BY A RABBI TO A JEW LIVING IN THE UNITED STATES IS NOT RECOGNIZED BY THE AMERICAN COURTS."

7. Samuel L. Clemens (Mark Twain, pseud.). "Concerning the Jews" . Harper's Magazine, 1899. Non-Fiction, Essay

Currently Available: The Complete Essays of Mark Twain, ed. Charles Neider, Doubleday & Company, Garden City, New York, 1967 $7.50

Mark Twain's eloquent defense of the Jews first appeared in Harper's Magazine, September, 1899. Twain spoke cogently in behalf of New York Jewry, which he lauded for its good citizenship and commercial acumen. He also defended world Jewry: "I am persuaded that in Russia, Austria and Germany nine-tenths of the hostility to the Jews comes from the average Christian's inability to compete successfully with the average Jew in busimess...." This is an interesting and important essay in light of pogroms in East Europe, the massive flow of East European Jews to the United States and the Dreyfus case, all occurring at the time of Twain's writing.

8. Bernard Drachman. From the Heart of Israel. 1905. Fiction, Stories

Currently Available: Books for Libraries, Inc., 50 Liberty Avenue, Freeport, New York 11520 $11.50

Ranging across middle and East Europe, this work contains several affecting and effective tales. One story in particular, "The Shlemihl," mixes a great deal of detail about a Lithuanian village with a carefully told story of a ne'er-do-well who becomes a respected man in America and returns to Lithuania to test his wife's love. Another interesting story, "The Rabbi's Game of Cards," concerns a rabbi's gambling in the interest of a faithful congregant.

9. Isaac Kahn Friedman. The Lucky Number. 1896. Fiction, Stories

Most of the stories in this volume have little or no Jewish content, with one important exception: "Aaron Pivansky's Picture." Set in Chicago, this long story combines elegant rhetoric with Jewish immigrant patois. Essentially, this is a tale of the unhealable break between an aspiring young artist and his pawnbroker father. Aaron finds consolation only in art and his love, Becky; the elder Pivansky, Solomon, finds value only in that which can be sold at a profit.

10. Montague Glass. Potash and Perlmutter. 1911. Fiction, Stories

Abe and Mawruss. 1911. Fiction, Stories

Object: Matrimony. 1912. Fiction, Novella

Elkan Lubliner, American. 1912. Fiction, Episodic Novel

The Competitive Nephew. 1915. Fiction, Stories

Montague Glass's stories, mostly of the smiling aspects

of rising Lower East Side entrepreneurial life, are consistently enjoyable and humorous. Populated by scheming businessmen -- who at bottom are tender and loving -- machinating, pompous lawyers and an endless variety of "suckers," "loafers" and "free-loaders," the stories present problems and solve them. It may be a matter of real estate, youthful romance, business competition -- no matter. Each will be explored semi-seriously, each will contain at least a healthy admixture of humor, and most will be resolved happily.

11. Hutchins Hapgood. The Spirit of the Ghetto: Studies of the Jewish Quarter of New York. 1902. Non-Fiction, Essay-Reportage

Currently Available: Schocken Books, $2.45

This book was originally issued in 1902. Many of the brief sketches of life in the ghetto can be enjoyed by students. Here they will get first-hand accounts of the exotic Jewish literary and other figures who abounded in New York. There are interpolated notes by Harry Golden, himself a Lower East Side boy, and an added and most extraordinary bonus is the inclusion of more than fifty drawings by the artist Jacob Epstein, another resident of the early Lower East Side.

12. Oscar Handlin. Adventure in Freedom: Three Hundred Years of Jewish Life in America. 1954. Non-Fiction, History

This is a respectable and readable historical survey. Teachers who wish to have a reasonable grasp of American-Jewish history might also want to look at Anita Lebeson's Pilgrim People (1950) or Rufus Learsi's The Jews in America (1954)

13. Irving Howe and Eliezer Greenberg, eds. A Treasury of Yiddish Stories. 1965. Introduction and Fiction, Stories

Currently Available: Viking Press, Inc., $3.50. Also, an abbreviated edition, Fawcett World(Premier Books), $.95

Indeed, this book is a treasury. Included in it are stories and tales by more than twenty Yiddish writers, all in quite good English translations. Of course, there are several pieces by Sholem Aleichem and I.L. Peretz, two of the most eminent Yiddish writers. Such other distinguished writers as Sholem Asch, Abraham Reisen and the brothers Singer, I.J. and Isaac Bashevis, are also represented. This thematic anthology communicates the grain and style of East European life. There is a very long and helpful introduction, part historical and part literary critical. Also, there are very brief biographical remarks on each author and a glossary. The material includes short stories, tales, folk tales amd proverbs, dozens of which will interest both teachers and students.

14. Fanny Hurst. Just Around the Corner. 1914. Fiction, Stories

Set in New York, these stories depict less-than-catastrophic problems of lower middle and middle class life. Several of the stories portray non-Jewish characters and settings, but at least two stories of some length focus on the middle class, German-Jewish milieu. Of some interest is a story entitled "Other People's Shoes," which provides insight into the strong work ethic of the German-Jewish community and the social cohesiveness of that community. In this story there is subtle conflict between a mother and son over the son's choice of a marital partner.

15. Myra Kelly. Little Citizens. 1904.Fiction, Stories

Wards of Liberty. 1907. Fiction, Stories

Little Aliens. 1910. Fiction, Stories

Using the persona Constance Bailey, Irish-Catholic first grade teacher in a Lower East Side school, Myra Kelly provides a wealth of detail on school life and matters connected with the young immigrant charges of Miss Bailey. In such a story as "A Little Matter of Real Estate" (Little Citizens), parental business conflicts enter the classroom; in "A Soul Above Buttons" (Wards of Liberty), the distortions the Lower East Side can create in a poor, working pre-teenager's life are portrayed; in "Games in Gardens" (Little Aliens), a humorous cultural misunderstanding in the school is illustrated. The themes in these volumes

range from humorous school incidents to romantic problems of older siblings to the harrowing effects of East European physical torture practiced upon a now incurably pathological six-year-old who dies in a Lower East Side street. These stories were sufficiently popular to elicit a letter from President Theodore Roosevelt, which said in part, "Mrs. Roosevelt and I and most of the children know your very amusing and very pathetic accounts of East Side school children almost by heart...."

16. Sol Liptzin. The Jew in American Literature. 1966. Non-Fiction, Literary History and Criticism

Currently Available: Bloch Publishing Company, $5.50

While cursory and certainly not exhaustive, teachers will find this book useful. It will alert them to what is available and presents enough information for the teacher to know whether he or she wishes to pursue a given work. Several dozen works of fiction written in English were published between 1881 and 1917. The bibliography here, of course, is valuable. Since much of this material is out-of-print but in the public domain, teachers can reproduce stories rather inexpensively, making copies from ditto masters.

17. Isaac Metzger, ed. A Bintel Brief: Sixty Years of Letters from the Lower East Side to the Jewish Daily Forward. 1971. Non-Fiction, Letters

Currently Available: Doubleday & Company, $6.95

This selection and compilation of letters, in fine translation, goes to the very heart of the Jewish experience in New York. The book, in small measure, belies the title to the extent that several letters are included from writers who lived in an area other than the Lower East Side. Dozens of Jews wrote to the editor of the Jewish Daily Forward asking for advice on matters of love, business, familial relationships, virtually every concern that affects the assimilating immigrant. There is very heavy emphasis on the years 1906-1917.

18. James Oppenheim. Dr. Rast. 1909. Fiction, Stories

Most of these stories are engaging, although sentimentalized and tainted by obviousness of plot and character. Dozens of Lower East Side themes -- love, labor, sanitary conditions, etc. -- are explored. "The Unborn" is very effective, depicting a love truncated by tuberculosis. A pair of young lovers' lyric happiness is shattered by a drop of blood on the pavement. "Rizpah," another good story, gets at the tension between a very bright, socially conscious woman's commitment to the reform of labor conditions and her personal romantic needs.

19. Jacob A. Riis. How the Other Half Lives. 1890. Non-Fiction, Reportage

The Children of the Poor. 1892. Non-Fiction, Reportage

Out of Mulberry Street. 1898. Non-Fiction, Reportage

The Battle with the Slum. 1902. Non-Fiction, Reportage

Children of the Tenements. 1905. Non-Fiction, Reportage

Neighbors: Life Stories of the Other Half. 1914. Non-Fiction, Reportage

Currently Available: How the Other Half Lives: American Century Series, Hill & Wang, $1.50

The Children of the Poor: Johnson Reprint Corp., Academic Press, 111 Fifth Ave., N.Y.,N.Y. 10003 $12.50

Out of Mulberry Street: Gregg Press, Inc., 121 Pleasant Avenue, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey 07458 $11.00

The Battle with the Slum: Patterson Smith Publishing Corp., 23 Prospect Terrace, Montclair, New Jersey 07042 $15.00

Children of the Tenements: Gregg Press, Inc., 121 Pleasant Avenue, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey 07458 $13.50

None of Jacob Riis's books concentrates exclusively on the Jews, but the Jews are always a major focus of his work. Librarians usually catalog Riis's work as reportage, but that is not necessarily accurate. While it is true that Riis drew his material from first-hand experience in the ghettos of New York and that his material is detailed and graphic, Riis is often lacking in objectivity and perfectly willing to invent dialogue he could not have been privy to, but which would enhance the interest of his story. Thus, the Jews worship money and continue to stand "...where the new day that dawned on Calvary left them standing, stubbornly refusing to see the light." Riis will frequently place quotes around the silent musings of a character or the dialogue between a husband and wife spoken not in his presence. Most of Riis's material, to be fair, is good reportage, and no one would wish to question his ability to engage the reader's interest.

20. Moses Rischin. The Promised City: New York's Jews, 1870-1914. 1970. Non-Fiction, History

    Currently Available: Harper Torchbook, $2.75

Teachers will find much valuable material on East European origins and settlement in New York City. This is a very good and detailed account of labor conditions, physical conditions, relations between East European and German Jews, and a host of other important matters. Rischin's book is the best summary of the New York City Jewish experience. Also, the bibliography will lead teachers to many sources. Able students may wish to consult parts of the book if they have an especially deep interest in the New York Jewish community.

21. Allon Schoener, ed. Portal to America: The Lower East Side, 1870-1925. 1967. Non-Fiction and Fiction Excerpts, History, Reportage, Sociology, Fiction, Photographs

    Currently Available: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, $12.95

    Also, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, paper, $5.95

This is an extremely handsome book and a pleasant introduction to the great New York Jewish community. There is some material on East Europe and the culture outside the Great Ghetto, but the focus is clearly on the Lower East Side. This anthology is organized thematically -- "Immigration," "The Street," "Work," etc. The excerpts, drawn from letters, newspapers, fiction and other sources, are characteristically brief and fascinating. There are dozens of excellent photographs that themselves constitute as eloquent an essay as one can find on the Lower East Side experience. Certainly, a school library could purchase one or two copies of this book, which both students and teachers will find riveting and informative.

22. Edward A. Steiner. The Broken Wall: Stories of the Mingling Folk. 1911. Fiction, Stories

The stories in this collection are informed by the theme of cultural pluralism as a reality, the melting pot as a sham, nativism as a powerful force, but minor episodes of cross-cultural cooperation as an increasing occurrence. Of the thirteen stories, only four or five concentrate on Jews and some of these are rather maudlin or sophomoric tales. Of interest are "Mules and the Tolstoy Doctrine," which depicts Jews and Christians extending their biases to a colony for consumptives in a western state, and "Will He Let Me In?" the generalized story of the plight of the entering immigrant, with a young, dying boy at its center to give a sense of particularity to the theme.

23. Henry S. Stollnitz. Glimpses of a Strange World. 1908. Fiction, Stories

Touching very frequently on love and romance themes, many of the stories in this volume are of dubious value. One story, almost long enough to be called a novella, "The Shimanowski Family in New York," does present a respectably faithful recounting of the adjustment of an immigrant family to new and bewildering environs. Somewhat simplistically, but with enough fidlity and lyricism to maintain reader interest, the social, religious, financial and romantic adaptation to life in New York are depicted.

24. David Warfield and M.A. Hamm. Ghetto Silhouettes. 1902. Fiction, Stories

Varying sharply in quality, these stories touch on life in East Europe and, in one case, Israel, but concentrate on New York's Lower East Side. Several of the stories, preeminently "The Run on Jobbelousky's," "A Bird of Prey," and "A Monument of Patience," are clever, well-made tales, much like those of O. Henry. There is a good deal of sociological value in these stories, since such issues as Zionism, interfaith relations and the conduct of the declining profession of matchmaking (the marriage broker or schatchen) are explored. However, several of the stories in this volume are amateurish and highly improbable in spite of the effort at craftsmanship and realism.

25. Mark Zborowski and Elizabeth Herzog. Life Is with People: The Culture of the Shtetl. 1967. Non-Fiction, Sociology

Currently Available: Schocken Books, $2.95

For insight into East European life in a small village or shtetl and for specific information about the culture of the East European Jew, this book, while somewhat rhapsodic, is indispensable. This relatively informal sociological study is appropriate for students to consult along special interest lines. Details of the daily lives of the East European Jews are recalled and recounted. The book does capture much of the spirit of a way of life that was consumed by the Nazi holocaust. Teachers and students will find the bibliography and glossary helpful.